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ABSTRACT

The first in a series of books devoted to describing, explaining, and developing the criteria and philosophy of a career education program is intended to introduce the parents and teachers of American Indian children to the concepts of career education. The book focuses on the first phase of career education, learning to live. It includes a rationale for bicultural education and cultural pluralism. A section for teachers is intended to help them understand career education program objectives and lists and describes 10 objectives for career awareness in grades K-4: awareness of self, others, culture, education, careers, and economics; decision making; beginning competency; skill development; and attitudes and appreciations. A section for parents includes eight suggestions for helping create a positive self-image in the child. (SB)

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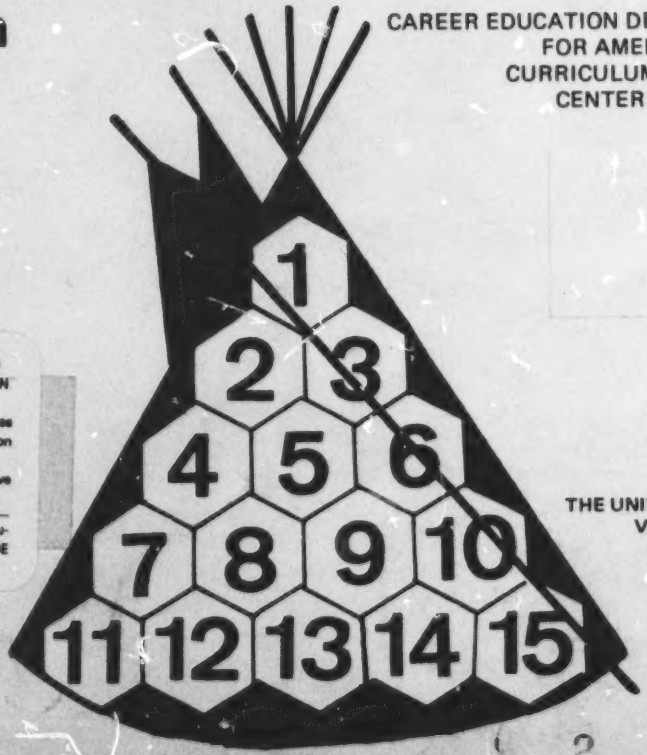
Career Education and the American Indian

A NOTEBOOK FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS



CAREER EDUCATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
FOR AMERICAN INDIAN CHILDREN
CURRICULUM/PERSONNEL RESOURCE
CENTER FOR INDIAN EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CAREER EDUCATION AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN

A Notebook for
Parents and Teachers

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4 [1976]

CAREER EDUCATION AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN

A Notebook for Parents and Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this notebook is to introduce parents and teachers of American Indian children to the concepts of Career Education. Parents are a primary influence upon the career decisions of their children, and because of this fact every effort should be made by teachers in the schools concerned, as well as by the parents themselves, to involve the parents in a variety of ways in the Career Education of their children.

Career education represents an approach to teaching in which classroom activities are related directly to the world of work. Students will gain a greater sense of awareness of the variety and importance of work and acquire skills and attitudes that are necessary for employment.

Lack of communication in society often results from a lack of common ground. This is true for parents of American Indian children as well as parents of non-Indian children. It is the hope of Career Education to provide a foundation upon which parents and children may communicate freely, and ultimately stand more closely together.

Parents and teachers are often at a loss for an answer to a child's question. Career Education can make possible a broadening of horizons for the students, and at the same time provide for an increase in knowledge, information and awareness on the part of the parents and teachers.

A career education program has three phases through which progress must be accomplished if the program is to be effective: (1) Learning to live, (2) Learning to learn, and (3) Learning to earn.

The Career Education Demonstration Project for American Indian Children, of The University of South Dakota, addresses itself in particular to the first phase, and suggests that a solid background be built upon this phase, before moving into the second and third phases.

PHASE I
LEARNING TO LIVE

Increased knowledge of self

Responsibility for one's life
Constructive use of leisure time
Development of personal strengths
Decision making skills
Cooperation - getting along with people

PHASE II
LEARNING TO LEARN

Relationship between school and work
Knowledge of the world of work
Pride in the job well done
Dignity of all work

PHASE III
LEARNING TO EARN

Preparation of self for employment work exposure/experience
Flexibility in career decisions
Process of career development

The remainder of this notebook includes a brief discussion on bicultural education, as well as a message to teachers of Indian children, and a note to parents.

This is the first of a series of booklets which will be devoted to describing, explaining, and developing the criteria and philosophy of a Career Education Program.

There are many ways in which to involve both teachers and parents in a Career Education program. One way that is suggested is the formation of a Parent/Teacher Discussion Group. Such a group, if motivated on their own, will ultimately aid in the development of positive child growth and development, and insure a future for their children capitalizes upon their individual interest and strengths.

Rationale for Bicultural Education

Education for Native American Students, to be relevant, must be bicultural. Modern American society is a unique mosaic of cultures, with a myriad of cultural variants such as language, customs, religions, traditions, ethnic heritage, socio-economic level, geographical location and other characteristics which define and constitute group aggregates. If education is to meet the demands of Native American students then it must have a bicultural component germane to the sociological, philosophical and psychological needs of the students.

There has been a steady growth away from the melting pot concept within the United States. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, of which the School of Education at The University of South Dakota is a member, adopted a statement in 1972 addressing the issue of multicultural education and cultural pluralism. Selected parts of this text follow:

> To endorse cultural pluralism is to endorse the principle that there is no one model America. To endorse cultural pluralism is to understand and appreciate the differences that exist among the nation's citizens. It is to see these differences as a positive force in the continuing development of a society which professes a wholesome respect for the intrinsic worth of every individual. Cultural pluralism is more than a temporary accomodation to placate racial and ethnic minorities. It is a concept that aims toward a heightened sense of being and of wholeness of the entire society based on the unique strengths of each of its parts.
>
> . . . . To accept cultural pluralism is to recognize that no group lives in a vacuum -- that each group exists as part of an interrelated whole.
>
> If cultural pluralism is so basic a quality of our culture, it must become an integral part of the educational process at every level . . .
>
> . . . . The goal of cultural pluralism can be achieved only if there is full recognition of cultural differences and an effective educational program that makes cultural equality real and meaningful . . .

The School of Education and faculty members of the career education program endorse this aforementioned statement dealing with cultural pluralism.

The need for bicultural education is multidimensional. It concerns itself with relationships between pupil and teacher, parent and teacher, teacher and community and a multitude of personal relationships. Bicultural education will assist the pupils and teachers involved in the career education program to recognize the plurality of the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of individuals, accepting plurality and building upon it, thus enriching the total society.

As members of the career education program working for bicultural education and cultural pluralism, we must be wary of committing an error in accepting the melting pot theory. The goals of bicultural education and cultural pluralism will be realized only when both minority and majority ethnic groups accept the advantages and responsibilities of living in a pluralistic society. It is no longer feasible for any one ethnic group to remain fixed in its ways while expecting other groups to adjust to its standard.

The career education program is dedicated to the premise of cultural pluralism and in providing an education to Native American students that will ensure their developing the skills necessary to function effectively in a culturally pluralistic society.

A MESSAGE TO TEACHERS OF INDIAN CHILDREN

This message to you - **Teachers of Indian Children** - is to help you understand the objectives of our Career Education Progr...

> You are crucial to the success of the program---without your understanding and participation, we will ge nowhere.

Our Career Education Program is for all ages, but begins with grades K-4. This age level concentrates on Career Awareness and that begins with self-awareness.

Our objectives with grades K-4 are:

1. Awareness of Self
2. Awareness of Others
3. Awareness of Culture
4. Awareness of Education
5. Awareness of Careers
6. Awareness of Economics
7. Decision Making
8. Beginning Competency
9. Skill Development
10. Attitudes and Appreciations

What do these mean for you?

Awareness of Self means you will help your Indian students develop positive feelings of worth about themselves.

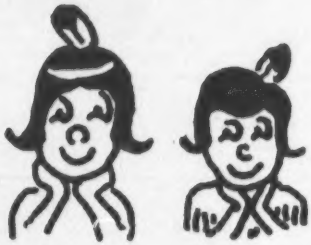
THIS

LEADS

TO

Awareness of Others

When children like and accept themselves, then you, the teacher, can help them like and accept others.



Awareness of Culture

You will also help your Indian children become aware of their own culture. This is a particularly important objective. Everyone needs to have pride in his own heritage.

Do you as a teacher really know enough about the culture and values of your Indian students?

Perhaps this objective is a dual one--

Learning experiences for you as well as the child.
THINK ABOUT IT

Awareness of Education

Far too many Indian children have become disenchanted with the education we have offered them and have opted out at an early age.

Your responsibility as a teacher is to help your Indian students become aware of opportunities available to them through education.

Why school is necessary!
What school can offer!
How school can benefit them!

14

Awareness of Careers

Now it is also part of your responsibility as the teacher to help students learn about the broad range of careers available to him locally, and in the larger world.

Let him fantasize about all that he can be.

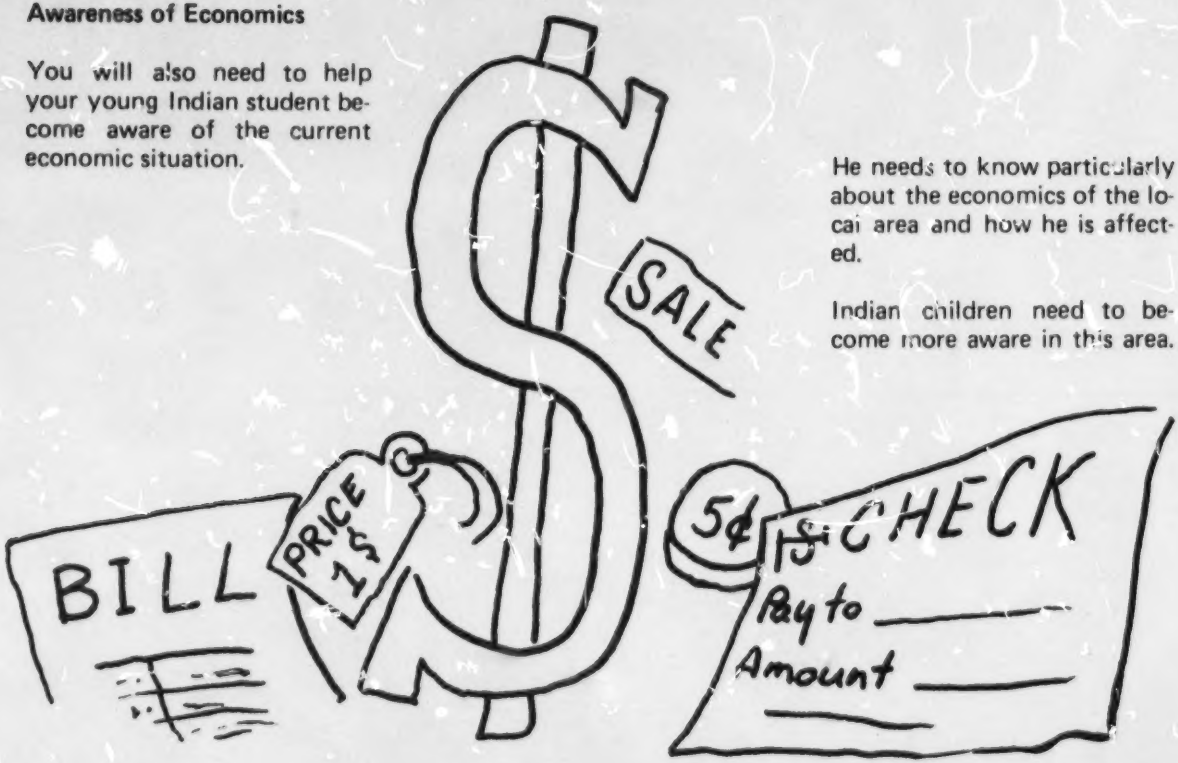
DREAMS CAN COME TRUE
YOU KNOW!

Awareness of Economics

You will also need to help your young Indian student become aware of the current economic situation.

He needs to know particularly about the economics of the local area and how he is affected.

Indian children need to become more aware in this area.



Decision Making

You can help your Indian student learn how to make wise decisions, by helping him to look at all sides of a question, weighing pros and cons.

Intelligent planning and decision making are vital in career choices, but you the teacher are vital in teaching the process of decision making.

Finally, you the teacher can help your children identify and develop skills and competencies that will enhance their future employability.

Language and Communication skills are probably the most vital and you as the teacher of the young child really contribute highly toward the language development of the young child.

DO YOU REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT TO CAREER EDUCATION
THE FIRST GRADE TEACHER IS?

We hope you will want to learn more about the culture and value systems of your students and their parents. Interact with them, and others who can help you become more knowledgable and understanding.

Ask questions of parents, aides, other school employees, anyone who can help you learn. Avail yourself of all opportunities in the Indian community to learn.

Don't take for granted that White, middle class culture is superior.

When you can become understanding and accepting, we can do tremendous things in CAREER EDUCATION.

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Did anyone ever tell you how important you are? Did anyone ever tell you that you have a most important job? The task of being parents is the most demanding, most challenging, most important of all jobs in society.

Research points out that it is the influence of parents on the child which affects his or her personality development, far more than the influence of the school or the community. Although we know that the school, church, and community as well as the media shape the lives of our children, it is the parents who are the prime modeling influence.

When a child feels good about himself or herself (that is, has a good self-concept) and knows that there are a number of things that he or she can do well (self-esteem) then that child is freed. He is freed and unafraid to try new tasks, venture where he has never been before, both physically and academically; free to be creative, to explore to the fullest his own environment and the world of learning.

Native Americans have been known to be very loving with their children, and to have strong family

ties. Many traditions, as well as tales of the old days and old ways bind you all together. These are attributes you can easily use to help your child along the road to greater self-concept and self-esteem, to a more positive attitude to life and learning.

If you will faithfully follow the suggestions which follow, then your child will have a greater chance in life. He will be helped to feel good about himself, a fundamental attitude to success in learning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS TO FOLLOW

1. Always remember:

The way you view your child
is the way he views himself.

If you see him as lazy or naughty
He will see himself as lazy or naughty.

If you see him as trustworthy and honest
He will see himself as trustworthy and honest.

If you can see him as capable and worthy
He will see himself as capable and worthy.

YOU HOLD THE KEY TO YOUR CHILD'S VIEW OF HIMSELF.

2. Be consistent:

Consistency in family rules and interactions helps the child to a knowledge of whom he is. Children need to be able to predict what is expected of them and how their parents will react in given situations.

3. Be proud to be a American Indian.

Teach your children about their heritage. Tell them about their ancestors, their ways, their traditions. Speak to them in Dakota. Give them a sense of pride in their language.

4. Be Interested:

Whenever possible, let boys spend time with their fathers doing what father likes to do, working around home, hunting, fishing, riding horseback or doing some type of hand work. This will help the young child develop the sense of maleness that is so important to his self-concept.

Likewise, let girls spend time with their mothers doing what mother needs and likes to do. This will help the young girl develop the sense of femaleness that is important to her self-concept.

5. Provide experiences:

Provide many experiences for your child. Take him or her with you to a variety of places (store, church, library, community center, ranch, farm, city, zoo, etc.) and then talk to him

or her about what you both have seen. The child's world will be enlarged by your observations and his or her knowledge will be increased by exposure to more of the world.

6. Read to your child:

Highly developed thought patterns follow a mastery of the language. Expose your child to many different kinds of books. Available either from a public or school library, these books will aid in expanding vocabulary, understanding, and knowledge.

7. Develop responsibility:

Give your child small tasks to do which are within his ability to accomplish. Small children can run errands, make their beds, dress themselves, and perform some household tasks. You can think of many other things your child might be able to do. Then, praise him when he does his job well. **Be specific.** It is much better to say to a child, "You did that very well. I am pleased with you," than to say, "You are a good boy!" Specific praise for tasks performed helps make a child proud of his accomplishments. It increases his good feeling about himself.

Remember, some tasks are too difficult for a child. He may not be able at an early age to make his bed successfully, but perhaps he can smooth the sheets and quilts as you do the rest. He can be praised even for that! Perhaps he can't clean the whole house, but he can pick up the mess he makes. He can be praised for that! Encouraging him in little things will urge him onwward to try to please you in bigger things. EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE!

8. Spend time with your children:

Be interested in whatever interests your child. Is it camping? May be you can read about what equipment is needed and go camping together. Is it ranching? Maybe you could spend some time together on a ranch, seeing cattle branded, etc. Is it watching T.V.? Perhaps you could take time to watch his favorite program with him and then talk about it together. Such questions as, "Did you like that program? What did you like about it? Which character did you think was best? Were they good people . ., etc., etc., helps your child focus more clearly on what he sees and hears, develops his skill in observation and memory, and helps him know that you care about him. Thus grows his self-esteem and his ability to function successfully in school and in society.

REMEMBER! **YOU** HOLD THE KEY TO YOUR CHILD'S VIEW OF HIMSELF

AS YOU VIEW YOUR CHILD
SO HE VIEWS HIMSELF!

FOLLOW THE ABOVE SUGGESTIONS!

The important job of parenthood is before you. Seize this opportunity to help your child grow in self concept and self esteem.

PERFECT ANGEL

LIL DEVIL

or... A NORMAL, HAPPY CHILD?

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